

Pentecost A—May 11, 2008  
John 20:19-23  
The Rev. David Wilt

### **Pentecost!**

**When the zeal of the Holy Spirit descends upon us in flames of fire. When the power of the Holy Spirit rushes at us like a rush of wind—a gale force blowing us in directions we would not normally go. Or, when the Peace of a loving God warmly breathes upon us, bringing comfort, bringing understanding.**

### **Pentecost!**

**We celebrate it in bright colors of red, and flying banners and doves. Indeed a celebration.**

**But more than that, Christ saying to us “Peace be with you”. But a peace different from any peace that we understand. Because it is a peace that causes us, forces us if you will, to come to hear one another, to come and understand one another, to hear what the other person is saying. Not just forming our defense, or preparing our next comment.**

**Others speaking in their native tongue. Sharing their hopes, fears, opinions, beliefs, and us hearing them, in our own language and culture. Yet understanding.**

**Let’s look for a moment at the Gospel.**

**“When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the Disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews”.**

**Where was this coming from?**

**These were Jews! And, therein lies a hint to perhaps the explanation of the fear. Some of our worst fears are often those that are trapped inside our souls. Things our parents told us we should fear. Things our culture has told us are sinful or frightening. Things perhaps, that have been put in Scripture to create a way of thinking to establish a mind set. Or perhaps just a reflection of the culture of that time. Most scholars believe that this text is not so much a statement of fact as it is an emerging Gentile faith that was becoming more distant from the Jewish disciples.**

**We are all filled to some degree with some of this Hypocrisy, some of this prejudice. Some of this tendency to look down or with mistrust, upon others who may not look, act or speak as we do.**

**Sandy and I would go to lunch often at a restaurant in Jacksonville owned by people of Arabic descent. Following 911, they expressed to us the change they had noticed from people they had previously called friends. People who had been their customers for years. There was now a fear, a mistrust, an alienation.**

**And, when we begin to look upon others who are different from who we are, we can lock ourselves in a spiritual vacuum, for fear of what they might do to us.**

**But on that first day of the week, that day of Pentecost, Jesus delivered to us the key to opening those doors by offering us the breathe of the Holy Spirit. We are, by following that Spirit able to set aside our fears and understand all of God's creation.**

**Still the wind of the spirit blows in different ways. It blows however it must blow, to get the love of Christ into the world. The wind of the spirit is a wind we can resist. It is a wind that for a time we may even turn our backs to. It is a wind, however, like the will of God itself, and it will not be denied or ignored. We may be agents of that Godly wind, or resisters in the name of false prophesy, but if it is the will of God, it will prevail.**

**Thirty fours years ago it blew in protest, perhaps a gale of a wind, as eleven women were ordained into the Episcopal Church as Priests, amidst much debate and turmoil and division.**

**Forty five years ago the wind blew again in a rage of indignation as Dr. Martin Luther King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and proclaimed that he had a dream that one day all people may be accepted as human beings regardless of color or stature in life.**

**Now in 2008 we stand on the edge of years of the Holy Spirit blowing, where a woman or a black man, and a white man will all have the chance to be president of the United States. Do not underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit when we allow it to blow upon us.**

**It is Mother's day in addition to Pentecost, and how appropriate that they should fall on the same day. For myself, and for many others, as our Dad's were telling us how to grow up, our mother's were simply praying that we would grow up and be accepted and be happy. That is the breath of God! That is the Holy Spirit. That is the door opener for the real power of God to work in our church and in our community**

**Open your heart to the power of God at work in us.  
Receive it as it comes:**

**"Like the murmur of the dove's song**

**Like the challenge of her flight**

**Like the vigor of the winds rush**

**Like the new flames eager might**

**Come Holy Spirit Come**

**To the Members of Christ's body**

**To the branches of the vine**

**To the Church in faith assembled**

**To her midst as gift and sign**

**Come Holy Spirit Come**

**With the healing of division  
With the ceaseless voice of prayer  
With the power of love and witness  
With the peace beyond compare  
Come Holy Spirit Come**

**Carl Daw**